



Bureau of Intelligence and Research

Terrorism Report

June 24, 1985

Weekly Terrorism Highlights #22

1. LEBANON: The Hijacking of TWA 847.

Elements of the pro-Iranian radical Lebanese Shiite group, Hizballah (Party of God) are involved in the continuing detention of American passengers from the hijacked TWA 847. It is still not clear, however, if Hizballah was responsible for the original takeover of the plane. Many in Beirut now believe Amal was in fact responsible for the hijacking.

One of the original hijackers briefly held by Greek authorities asserted that he and his accomplices were engaged in what was essentially a freelance operation to obtain the release of relatives held in Israel. We note, however, that their statements made from the plane had a distinct Hizballah coloration (e.g. blaming the US for the May 18 explosions in Riyadh).

In any case it is clear from [redacted] statements by Amal strongman Nabih Barri to US officials, that armed Hizballah elements subsequently boarded in Beirut. Barri also stated that he placed some of his followers on the plane in an attempt to control the situation better.

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Amal and Hizballah have been engaged in a cold war in which each is attempting to gain the allegiance of the Shiite man with a gun. Much of this battle has centered in South Lebanon, where both have been seeking to appear as protectors of the Shiite population against the Israelis. The demand that Israel release its more than 700 Shiite prisoners is part of this ongoing campaign. Barri obviously feels that if he is perceived to be abandoning a chance to free the detainees he will suffer a setback.

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State Dept. review completed